

Utilizing Program-Level Data

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) utilizes information from screenings, ongoing observations, program quality evaluations, and insight from parents to determine if the systems in place are working and how the program can best respond to the needs of enrolled children. The data-based approach allows for a more effective and efficient use of resources. A data analysis team can include the early childhood specialist (ECS), the principal and/or director, representation from teaching teams and parents, and other specialists, as appropriate.

A systematic approach brings the team together three times each program year. Program data are aggregated and provided to the data analysis team in advance. Data sets should be prepared for the meeting in a reader-friendly format such as bar graphs, and without identifying features such as child names. The consistent session facilitator should be trained in team facilitation. The ECS is a lead member of the team. Logistics such as the school-year schedule for meeting dates/times, places, and agenda may be prepared by the director or principal.

Reporting leads to self-scrutiny: what staff members are doing collectively and what supports are delivered to staff. During the end-of-year meeting, the team:

- Identifies the current level of performance across relevant indicators, evident strengths, and extraordinary accommodations for children/families (e.g., attendance rates, program settings and/or options, language groups, child, family or community risk factors).
- Sets measurable goals and objectives.
- Agrees to eliminate what is non-effective, for example, strategies which resulted in low-level *Program Quality Assessment* scores.
- Addresses whether policies and procedures require revision.
- Inventories available program resources such as time, money, personnel, technology, curriculum resources, and local training opportunities.

After the meeting, the ECS arranges for meaningful professional development related to the goal. This could include a facilitated, rich staff discussion around a journal article, or contracting with a trainer from the curriculum or child assessment vendor, and will also include supports for implementation such as observation-feedback, peer modeling, coaching, and self-assessment. Curriculum materials should be available or readily created to implement the strategy. The action plans, including timeframes for progress monitoring, are shared with teaching teams. The ECS is responsible for monitoring fidelity of intervention and gains in child development. Measurement strategies are important because they address accountability to the continuous improvement efforts that are in place. Changes to agreed-upon strategies may at times require an additional team meeting. When progress monitoring is implemented, the result is a strengthened and individualized instructional program.